

9 Management Options



Vernal pool reflection, Elizabeth Painter photo

Management Options

Introduction

The National Park Service (NPS) recognizes that many other public agencies, private conservation organizations, and individuals successfully manage important natural and cultural resources. The NPS applauds these accomplishments, and actively encourages the expansion of conservation activities by state, local and private entities, and by other federal agencies. Areas managed by these diverse conservation interests constitute a “nationwide system of parks,” not just a “national park system.”

National Park Service *Management Policies* specify that unless direct NPS management of a studied area is identified as the clearly superior alternative, the NPS will recommend that one or more other entities assume a lead management role, and that the area not receive national park system status (NPS *Management Policies*, 2001, Section 1.3.4). In this case, NPS management has been determined to be infeasible, so only alternatives that do not involve NPS management are fully evaluated.

Management Options Under Consideration

The National Park Service considered a no-action alternative, plus one other management option that addresses only the resources identified by the Army as excess, through the BRAC realignment process:

Alternative A: No Action

Alternative B: Addition to Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument and Designation as an Affiliated Area of the National Park System

These alternatives are considered feasible alternatives, and therefore are presented in greater detail in the “Alternatives” chapter of this draft study report. Their environmental and socioeconomic consequences are analyzed in the *Environmental Assessment*.

Management Options No Longer Under Consideration

The National Park Service developed and considered a number of options involving various approaches to NPS management, before determining that such options were not feasible. The following management options were considered, and then rejected when it was determined that they were not feasible.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE OWNERSHIP OF BRAC PROPERTY

The National Park Service considered taking title to all BRAC excess property proposed for NPS reuse, including the Milpitas Hacienda and related grounds and outbuildings, the five ranch bungalows, the Gil Adobe, the one acre of land under and adjacent to the Tidball Store, and the Javelin Court housing area. The National Park Service considered direct management of these areas, as well as management in cooperation with California State Parks or other agencies. This option was rejected when it was determined that establishment of a new national park unit involving NPS ownership and management was not financially feasible, and that many of the BRAC excess properties were not nationally significant.

VISITOR PROGRAMS ON FORT HUNTER LIGGETT LANDS

The National Park Service considered proposing a partnership program with Fort Hunter Liggett to allow for controlled public recreational and educational use of the extensive resources of Fort Hunter Liggett, without diverting Army resources or impacting the training mission and activities. Under this option, the NPS would have provided additional visitor services, including guided tours and other educational and interpretive services, as compatible with Army training activities, security requirements and resource protection. This option was rejected due to concerns about safety (including unexploded ordnance), security, and potential impacts on training activities.

DIRECT TRANSFER AUTHORITY FOR FUTURE EXCESS LAND

The National Park Service considered seeking legislation to authorize Fort Hunter Liggett lands to be directly transferred to the NPS or the US Forest Service, if Fort Hunter Liggett were ever declared excess to military needs. The purpose of this legislation would have been to ensure long-term resource protection and public access and use of the rich and diverse lands that today make up Fort Hunter Liggett, in the event that the Defense Department no longer had need for the area. This option was rejected because these areas are in active use and are expected to be retained by Fort Hunter Liggett for the indefinite future, and because of concerns about clean-up of unexploded ordnance and other hazardous materials.

Summary

If NPS ownership and management of Fort Hunter Liggett resources were feasible, the National Park Service could contribute significantly to the conservation and public enjoyment of the area's resources. However, because of the concerns outlined in the "Feasibility" chapter of this draft study report, NPS ownership and management have been found to be not feasible. Therefore, the alternatives evaluated in this draft study report focus only on the areas identified by the Army as excess to their needs, and on management by organizations other than the NPS. Further detail is provided in the "Alternatives" chapter of this draft study report.

Mission San Antonio de Padua, circa 1927. Julia Morgan Collection, Special Collections, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

*photo available in printed report